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South-South Cooperation and Neo-Liberal Hegemony in a Post-Aid World.

Behrooz Morvaridi and Caroline Hughes

ABSTRACT

South-South Cooperation (SSC) has returned as a significant trope in the contemporary rhetoric of the aid industry. We compare the way that the idea of SSC is being currently constructed. In the 1960s and 1970s, SSC was discussed as constituting a challenge to the ideological dominance of the global north, presented initially as a counter-hegemonic challenge to neo-colonialism. Currently it is framed similarly as a challenge to neoliberalism. However, the current iteration of SSC differs fundamentally from the first round in the early 1970s, largely because of differences in assumptions about *who is co-operating with whom* and *to what end*, in the context of SSC. These differences are significant for the material practice of SSC and the ideological function of SSC rhetoric.

Keywords: South-South Cooperation, Global Partnership, Emerging Donors, Neo Liberalism

INTRODUCTION

South-South Co-operation (SSC) has been an important and contested term in the development discourse and the aid industry lexicon since the 1960s. It fell into disuse in the 1980s but has re-surfaced in the context of the emergence of new donors, in a rhetoric that self-consciously reaches back to ideas from the 1970s. The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation defines SSC as:

> a broad framework for collaboration among countries of the South in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and technical domains. … Developing countries share knowledge, skills, expertise and resources to meet their development goals through concerted efforts (UNOSSC, 2016:2).

This contemporary understanding of SSC differs significantly from the original political implications of the term. SSC rhetoric emerged in the context of 1960s dependency theory. It located exploitation at an inter-state level, as something that states and companies in the North did to the states and peoples of the South. It presented development as a state-led challenge to Northern dominance that was potentially progressive and representative – even perhaps ultimately democratic or emancipatory. Because of this, we contend, the initial iteration of SSC was specifically politicising. It presented problems of development as appropriately addressed through political struggle in line with ideas of justice, sovereignty and emancipation. This ideal foundered on the reality of the post-colonial state in the South as a contested site which elites were able to dominate, often through violence, derailing the prospects for democratic control of capital. The neoliberal turn in the late 1970s and the violence of structural adjustment disempowered the state in the South in any case, vis-à-vis a constructed ideal of the free market, thereby promoting a depoliticised approach to development as a technical agenda (Hout and Robison, 2009).

Over the past decade, SSC has returned to the international aid agenda alongside Southern donors to the aid industry, prompting debate about its continued significance. Some authors, not to mention politicians such as Robert Mugabe, regard the return of SSC as a renewed challenge to northern donors geopolitical dominance and neoliberal hegemony (Tan-Mullins et al, 2010; Quadir, 2013). Traditional donor agencies regard it rather as an opportunity to transcend the contestation of past development models in favour of a more genuine consensus on the appropriateness of neoliberalization.

In this article, we argue that contemporary ideas about SSC do not retrieve the radical potential of the original formulation, but expand the hegemonic neoliberal world order through a reframed idea of North and South. This promotes a new common sense understanding of the contemporary international political economy while further depoliticising the idea of development. It hijacks the critical force of dependency theory, harnessing the terminology of the 1970s and a nostalgia for state-led development to an ideological fix that in fact shores up the neoliberal world order in the context of a potentially destabilising shift in the functioning of global capital.

We draw on Robert Cox's elaboration of the role of power structures and social blocs formed around global governance institutions. We understand hegemony in Gramscian terms as a "historical-organic ideology" of ruling actors who gain consent for their projects through rendering them as common sense or unavoidable. The construction of hegemony is a contested process that requires effort, compromises and confrontation with a range of context-specific social forces. Where this process is at least partially successful, actors from both ruling and subordinate classes come to think of particular modes of production as natural and inevitable, and alternatives as extreme or unworkable. Indeed, hegemony operates to disguise class divisions themselves, and to present interested strategies of domination as public goods, equally beneficial to all. According to Cox, global governance institutions are primary mechanisms through which universal norms of a world-hegemony are clearly expressed and constitute spaces for the capitalist class to exercise power and influence (Cox, 2002).

SOUTH – SOUTH COOPERATION AND THE CRISIS OF AID

The era from the mid-1990s to the present day has seen a crisis of legitimacy for the aid industry, in which critiques of development principles and practice have emerged not only from the usual critical theorist perspectives but also from the radical right (Easterly, 2014; Moyo, 2009) and from industry insiders (Stiglitz, 2002). The rise of the language of partnerships, national ownership and participation all represent devices for re-framing development, replacing the invisible and often brutal hand of free market fundamentalism with a collective process in which aid recipients exercise agency. However, this new agenda has also attracted critical commentary, interrogating the power relations that are invoked in principle and in practice by a range of processes from village-level participatory budgeting to donor harmonization. Critics contended that the aid effectiveness agenda, although altering the language and form of donor-recipient relations, has done little to disguise the ongoing and

inevitable power differential between them (Harrison, 2001; Lie, 2015). Furthermore, donors increasingly and explicitly looked to a "selectivity" agenda which merely replaced ex-ante conditionality with ex-post (Mosley et al, 2003; Chambas et al, 2004). At the same time, extraordinary shifts in capital flows, and geographies of poverty have entailed a need for ideological work to produce a new common sense understanding of development and aid to protect the privileged status of capital (Eyben and Savage, 2013). In 2011, the High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan broke new ground in articulating the need for a "Global Partnership for Development" that directly acknowledged the rise of emerging donors and the aid and development activities currently framed as South-South Cooperation.

Members of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee have presented the emergence of new donors as a prop to neoliberal modes of capitalist development driven by the integration of poor economies and populations in globalizing markets for finance and commodities. For example, Richard Manning, Chair of the OECD Development Assistance Committee, commented in 2006 that "it is entirely logical that we move from a world dominated by North-South flows to a much more multi-polar approach where the web of cooperation links countries of every sort. The DAC should not aspire to be a donors' cartel" (Manning, 2006). However, he argued that DAC donors should take action to preserve the rules by which donors compete. This included insisting on maintaining the agenda set by the Millennium Development Goals; untying aid; maintaining international procurement standards; and guarding against protectionism. As Manning explained, "the objective should remain to maintain a level playing field among donors (ibid.)": in other words, to preserve the rules of the international aid system in a manner that is conducive to neoliberal approaches to development.

Given this approach, where does the idea of South-South Cooperation fit into contemporary aid industry dynamics given its radical antecedents? From a Gramscian perspective, we argue the Global Partnership and its embrace of SSC represents less a concession to a challenge from emerging social forces from below than an ideological shift intended to shore up the interests of capital while giving the appearance of a new approach to international development. SSC is particularly attractive to DAC donors because it offers ostensibly promising solutions to the problem of aid and power in several ways.

SSC is a phenomenon of emerging powers. It allows traditional donors to take a back seat, thus freeing aid-for-development from the politicizing issue of north-south relations more widely. At the very least, it can be used to suggest that recipient countries have an alternative to the oppressive power of a "harmonized" western liberal donor community. Even where the partners are unequal as, say, in the relationship between China and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, with their respective GDPs of US$11 trillion and US$11 billion, the ability to play off different donors can be represented as a strengthening of the recipients' hands. The 2010 Bogota Statement on SSC suggests that the increased contribution of middle-income countries to SSC is "opening a window of opportunity for all development actors to work together towards a more inclusive, effective *and horizontal* global development agenda' (Bogota Statement, 2010, para 1.d, emphasis added). This precludes the kinds of coercive powers associated with structural adjustment in the late 1980s to early

1990s promising new approaches to aid less overtly connected to North-South domination and in which, arguably, recipient countries have to accept complicity by virtue of having made a choice to engage.

Furthermore, the new emerging donors specifically reject the language of aid effectiveness that emerged in the "post-conditionality" era. They have substituted a language of sovereignty and non-interference for the language of good governance, partnership, and national ownership, a move that is attracting increasing interest from the DAC donors (Mawdsley, 2015), and offers the prospect of recasting development more believably as an equal enterprise between voluntarily contracting parties. This was the goal of the Paris Declaration and aid effectiveness agenda, but appears more likely to succeed under the guise of South-South solidarity.

Finally, in using the language of SSC, donors and recipients in the Global South are harking back to the radical formulations of dependency theory in the 1960s and 1970s, offering opportunities to harness the radicalism of that era as a prop to the legitimacy of new aid flows that may actually foster deeper forms of neoliberalisation. The increasing symbiosis between emerging and OECD economies and the contemporary modus operandi of emerging donors suggest that the new aid environment is unlikely to significantly challenge the basic assumptions of neoliberal development. Certainly, the way that SSC is used in contemporary policy documents is significantly different, and far less challenging to the dominance of globalised capital, from its uses in the early 1970s.

To demonstrate the contemporary deradicalization of SSC, we analyse a range of primary documents produced by landmark development summits among states and inter-state development actors in two eras, the 1970s and the 21st century, with particular attention to the following questions: how do advocates of SSC in the 1970s and the 2000s respectively understand problems of development? What form was SSC supposed to take in the 1970s and more recently? What are the implications of the role of the state in the international political economy

SOUTH – SOUTH COOPERATION IN THE 1970S

The framing of "North" and "South" has been fundamental to the history of aid-giving and development practice. The idea of the South emerged in the context of anti-colonial liberation movements and the geopolitics of the Cold War. Dependency theory provided the intellectual underpinnings for this framing of the international political economy, via its account of "core-periphery" relations based upon the violent operations of globalizing capital. Gunder Frank, for example, suggested that the use of coercion to extract surplus value from the periphery through processes of unequal exchange allowed capital accumulation in the centre (global north) while producing economic 'underdevelopment' and a dependent capitalist in the periphery (global south). Thus, 'the historical mission of capital is to cause underdevelopment in the periphery and development in the centre' (Frank, 1976: 9; also Emmanual, 1972). Dependency theory hypothesised that Southern post-colonial economies could accomplish independent industrial development only if ties to the centre are severed, or

the international economic system fundamentally transformed. Self-determination and social and economic development would only be achieved if the nations in the periphery were in an equal relationship with other nation states and not while relations between states were based on an unequal exchange of commodities. Crucially, the state in the South was central to this change. For neo-Marxist dependency theorists such as Amin, nationalisation of peripheral economies represents "the first essential step towards their socialization (Amin, 2010)" and in the South the "peoples and their States" represent a key political vehicle for transforming global economic processes (ibid).

The transformative potential of states in the South infused the idea of South-South Cooperation. The term is commonly traced back to the founding of the Non-Aligned Movement at the 1955 Bandung Conference of Asian and African states, that contested the Cold War co-optation of post-colonial states into relations of dependency as superpower clients. The final communique of the Bandung Conference listed several forms of economic, cultural and political cooperation to which newly independent Asian and African countries aspired as a means to lessen dependence on superpower patronage. In the economic sphere, this meant mutual technical assistance between countries in the South, promotion of intra-regional trade, and cooperation to stabilize commodity prices. These aspirations were pursued through a range of global and regional institutions. Particularly important were the United Nations Conferences on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) held four-yearly from 1964. UNCTAD was headed by the economist Raul Prebisch, one of the authors of the Prebisch-Singer thesis which proposed the empirical correlation underpinning dependency theory, between dependence on primary commodity exports, declining terms of trade and persistent development problems. UNCTAD's agenda was informed by the view that the international economic system was structurally unjust and that Northern states routinely exercised power to maintain the exploitation of former colonies.

The G77 was formed at the first UNCTAD conference in 1964, constituting a bloc of states who sought to use the UN General Assembly as a forum for contestation between diametrically opposed Southern and Northern economic interests. The G77 pursued the call for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) through the General Assembly giving rise to the Charter on the Economic Rights and Duties in the States in 1974, with the "fundamental purpose" of promoting "the establishment of the new international economic order, based on equality, sovereign equality, interdependence, common interest and cooperation among all states, irrespective of their economic and social systems." (UN Document, 1974). SSC in the fields of economic development and technical transfer were regarded as central drivers of necessary "structural changes in the world economy" (Dall-Oglio, 1988: 4).

Importantly in the Charter were subsequent plans of action including the Kuwait Declaration on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries in 1977, the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries of 1978, the Caracas Programme of Action on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries of 1981, and the Declaration on the Right to Development adopted by the United Nations in 1986. This was the result of many years of international campaigns centred on addressing inequalities between states and promoting the social, economic and political rights of the self-governing state. Despite the names of these

declarations, SSC was seen as a specifically political, facilitated by the exercise of power through global governance institutions – especially the increased voting power of the developing countries in the United Nations. Thus the UN General Assembly resolution calling for the NIEO in 1974 stated:

> The developing world has become a powerful factor that makes its influence felt in all fields of international activity. These irreversible changes in the relationship of forces in the world necessitate the active, full and equal participation of the developing countries in the formulation and application of all decisions that concern the international community. (UNGA, Dec. 3201, 1974: 2).

The UN General Assembly passed the Charter despite opposition from the US and other industrialised countries, that voted against it on the grounds that it would restrict capital flows (Brower and Tepe Jr, 1975: 301). The Charter had no binding force in international law and in fact the principles it expressed were contradicted by other on-going multilateral negotiations – such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the UN Conference on the Law of the Sea – which did lead to binding legal agreements, but based on quite different principles than those of the Charter (ibid).

In the context of the movement for the NIEO, and in the field of technological and economic cooperation, SSC had a rather subversive nature. The G77's 1981 Caracas Programme of Action on Economic Development between Developing Countries characterised the global economy as in a state of 'underlying structural maladjustment and … persisting lack of equity in international economic relations" based upon "injustice, inequality, exploitation and dependence' (G77, 1981). This was a state of affairs that required a "restructuring" but this was hampered by "the intransigent attitudes adopted by some developed countries which have shown a regrettable lack of political will (ibid)."

The NIEO and the SSC designed to bring it into being were based, then, upon very different principles from the neoliberal order which dominated conceptions of development from the 1980s onwards. The framing ideas of the NIEO and SSC were state sovereignty, economic nationalism and state intervention in and regulation of production, consumption and trade. State promotion of stable prices and fair trade in primary commodities were central with specific reference to the formation of producer cartels for primary commodities, intended to mimic the success of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries in the early 1970s.

Plans for exchanges of information, experts, training and education between different countries in the Global South were regarded as facilitating not only the spread of expertise, but also political solidarity between Southern states vis-à-vis an exploitative and "neo-colonial" set of Northern state and private interests. Thus the Kuwait Declaration on Technical Cooperation describes "a conscious, systematic and politically motivated process developed to create a framework of multiple links between developing countries" in a context of northern domination (Kuwait Declaration, para. 2). A pre-eminent role is awarded to the state: "as genuinely representative vehicles of the interests of the peoples of the periphery. Locating relations of exploitation at the inter-state level allowed the post-colonial state in the

South to be painted in a heroic light as the champion of economic liberation and the key to modernization and progress (Nandy, 1992:' 266).

Clearly, this rhetoric underplayed the extent to which class relations within post-colonial states were contested, and the extent to which elites in the Global South were prepared to betray the principles of democratic control of resources, monopolising development aid and profits from natural resources as political slush funds to shore up particular constituencies of support. It also sharply underplays the extent to which elites in the Global South in this era actually considered their interests were better served by alliances with the 'plutocracy of the oligopolies of the imperialist triad', as Amin puts it (2010), than with each other or with their own oppressed peoples at home. However, the significant point here is not the extent to which the original formulation of SSC offered a workable plan for achieving particular kinds of economic restructuring or levels of GDP growth, but the way in which it framed development as a contested set of processes in which political power and political struggles were decisive in determining distributional outcomes at both the domestic and international levels. In so doing, it provided the intellectual basis for political contestation of northern-dominated approaches to capitalist development.

THE NEO – LIBERAL COUNTER REVOLUTION AND THE NEW SSC

From the early 1980s onwards, the ability of states in the South to promote the NIEO weakened in the face of economic crisis and indebtedness. In this context, neoliberalism emerged as an ideological counter-attack on, not only dependency theory, but the whole enterprise of development economics (Fine 2005). For neoliberals, the idea of the Global South itself represented a self-serving political construct designed to extract foreign aid from former colonisers. Leading neoliberal economist Peter Bauer argued that 'the Third World and its antecedents and synonyms … are for practical purposes the collection of countries whose governments, with the odd exception, demand and receive official aid from the west' (Bauer 1981, 87).

Successful incursion by neoliberal global institutions on economic sovereignty in the Global South as well as in the former communist world has produced unprecedented economic integration in the form of proliferations of complex transnational production networks directed by private corporations and the liberalization of controls on the flow of capital. Panitch and Gindin, for example, describe the way in which officials in European and US financial institutions regarded the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997/8 as 'an opportunity to complete the opening of Asia and other regions to global capital' (2013: 283). This, they argue, increased the pace of capitalist globalization and prompted a massive expansion in global financial flows, including to the developing world, where personal credit became available to new middle classes for the first time.

These developments can be regarded as amounting to a new emerging international economic order, in the context of rapid growth of particular territories and economic sectors in the Global South. However, this is a far different order from that envisaged by dependency theorists, characterised by networks of integrated production which have transformed the

global division of labour, shifting manufacturing jobs from the old Global North to emerging economies, even while high-tech research and development and consumption remain concentrated in the North. While these trends permit rapid GDP growth in formerly least developed countries, they simultaneously cement the dominance of the Global North and particularly the US, with manufacturing industries in the South increasingly dependent upon US finance and US markets. This consolidation of power entails the entrenchment of certain neoliberal assumptions and formations in the apparatus of governance across both North and South.

Intervention in the practices and processes of state building and state regulation of markets is increasingly intimately effected by the embedding of international institutions, experts and procedures into the fabric of government in the Global South (Harrison, 2001; Hameiri, 2010). States in the Global South have largely accepted the principles of open markets, free trade and convertible currencies and the necessity of policies to attract foreign direct investment as a key driver of growth. This represents the successful export of neoliberalism outside the old zone of advanced industrialised countries, producing what Panitch and Gindin (2013) call an 'American Empire'. The impact on the emerging economies fundamentally challenges the ideological underpinnings of traditional overseas development assistance in which industrialised countries supported the primary commodity producing South. However, concentration of power in the North remains a central feature of the international political economy, thus suggesting the continued salience of conceptions of a 'North-South divide'.

SSC AND AID MODALITY

In this new order, four key developments have affected the way that the aid context is conceptualised and the reappearance of SSC as a new aid modality. First, the shift in manufacturing activity from the industrial North to the South has produced a radical change in the geography of poverty, such that most poor people now live in middle income countries, with profound effects on the imagining of aid as 'overseas development assistance'. This has contributed to the second key development - a shift in the policies of traditional aid donors towards what has been termed a 'post-aid' approach to development finance (Mawdsley et al 2014). This links development finance to market access through the provision of services to reduce risk and promote market share and reduces funding of traditional development programmes, except in conflict-affected and fragile states (HM Treasury and DFID. 2015). A third key development is the increased significance of new types of donors, particularly the so-called emerging donors (Mawdsley 2012). These actors are commonly portrayed as doing aid differently from the traditional DAC donors, distanced from conditionality and post-conditionality alike. The significance, particularly, of new emerging donors in global governance institutions is a significant aspect of the changing aid environment, as evident in, for example, the shift in influence from the G8 to the G20 following the Global Financial Crisis of 2008 (Wood 2009) and the emergence of new aid institutions such as the New Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

A final significant feature of the contemporary era is the commodities boom of 2004 to 2014. 80 per cent of African exports are primary commodities. The decade of the 'superboom' in commodities provided high levels of liquidity for states in poor countries, and led to encouraging rates of economic growth in regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa for the first time since the early 1970s (African Development Bank 2015, 19). Revenues from the commodities boom were at least partially invested in social safety nets that may have helped to reduce poverty in such countries, prompting widespread perceptions of an 'Africa rising' success story along the lines of the Asian miracle (Rowden, 2015) and a positive evaluation of the impact of aid from China, which has been closely linked to commodity trade deals. However, the high price of commodities has at the same time stifled manufacturing and the end of the commodities boom has entailed collapsing growth rates in a number of African countries (African Development Bank, 2015: 21; Bailey, 2016; Chonghaile, 2016).

These trends indicate that the concepts of 'Global South', aid recipients, former colonies and poverty no longer overlap unproblematically. Robert Zoellick, president of the World Bank, claimed in 2010:

> 'If 1989 saw the end of the Second World with communism's demise then 2009 saw the end of what was known as the Third World. We are now in a new fast-moving multipolar world economy…. where North and South, East and West, are now points on a compass not economic destinies' (Zoellick 2010).

This raised new hopes that countries of the South could reduce dependence on Northern aid. The Declaration on SSC issued at a G77 summit in 2003 stated: 'economic growth in several developing countries and the strengthening of their domestic capabilities can have strong impacts on the scope and effectiveness of SSC' (G77 2003, para. 8). In 2011, in a similarly optimistic vein, the UN Secretary General reported the prediction that by 2030, SSC will constitute 'one of the main engines of growth, accounting for 57% of the world's gross domestic product' (Ban 2011, para 8). The return of SSC in a context of apparent Southern success in a neoliberal global economy has raised the question of how far SSC has transformed from its original formulation and what role it is intended to perform in the contemporary international political economy.

THE NEW SSC: WHO COOPERATE WITH WHOM

The claim that SSC represents a challenge to the hegemony of northern donors has been put forward by a range of commentators. At one end of the spectrum, Samir Amin in 2008 argued that SSC represented a 'bottom up' multilateralism and 'a movement from civil society… to provide the grounding for a transformed form of global governance' (Amin, 2008: 4). He argues that SSC remains a potent form of political struggle in the contemporary era insofar as it promotes delinking the economies of the South from the exploitative system of global capitalism.

More commonly, commentators have focused on the geopolitical challenge represented by the rise of the BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Armijo and Roberts

describe the combination of increasing economic weight and political coordination between these emerging powers as constituting 'the clearest… institutional manifestation of the efforts of rising powers to assert themselves in global governance' (2014: 506), directed at gaining increased formal political power within global governance institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank, and challenging the dominance of the Global North. The response of the US to China's establishment of the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) would seem to support that view. The Bank was set up in 2016 with capital funding of $100 billion, specifically to offer an alternative to the Western-dominated World Bank and the Japanese-backed Asian Development Bank. Much of the debate over the role of the new bank has focused on the potential for China to promote its 'geopolitical interests' in competition with US.. However, the position of the US has also been criticised as failing to recognise the significance of China's move as a buttress to the neoliberal order, rather than a challenge to it. Joseph Stiglitz, for example, argued that US opposition to the new bank represented a mistaken concern to maintain US 'hegemony', failing to notice that China's actions in establishing the Bank mirror the US's own embrace of multilateralism in the aftermath of World War Two (Stiglitz, 2015). Similarly, Chinese finance minister Lou Jiwei explained China's intention as more international responsibility for the development of the Asian and global economies. This stance of upholding rather than undermining the existing order fits with Armijo and Roberts' finding that the BRICS have 'neither coalesced around the developing world's traditional agenda of redistribution *nor developed a radically new alternative model* for international order' (2014: 522, emphasis added).

China's key concern in financing massive infrastructure projects across Asia via the AIIB is to ease its domestic economic imperative of sucking energy and commodities from outside its borders into its Southern and South Western manufacturing zones. Thus the AIIB exemplifies the way that China - and India, the second largest shareholder - have become promoters of the established order. It reflects the pluralization of power in the international system and a new way of doing things that is in some respects differs from established aid practices – an 'edit' of the Washington consensus, in Ban and Blyth's terminology (Ban and Blyth, 2013: 245) - but this presages an expansion of neoliberal capitalist relations rather than a challenge to them.

Similarly, the Global Partnership Agreement signed at the High Level Forum on Aid in Busan in 2011 appears to directly challenge the hegemonic power of northern donors, when it states:

> 'We commit to modernise, deepen and broaden our co-operation, involving state and non-state actors that wish to shape an agenda that has until recently been dominated by a narrower group of development actors' (Busan 2011, para. 7).

SSC is specifically referenced as a resource for achieving this goal: 'we welcome the opportunities presented by diverse approaches to development co-operation, such as South-South co-operation' (Busan 2011, para. 8). However, comparison of the Busan Global Partnership Agreement and other recent documents on SSC - such as the outcome document of the Nairobi High Level UN Conference on SSC held in 2003, and the Bogota Plan of

action formulated in 2010 — suggests that the transformation of the aid context identified above has prompted four key differences in the recent conceptualisation of SSC, with implications for the politics of who cooperates with whom and to what end.

First, 'triangular cooperation', or forms of cooperation which incorporate actors from both Global South and Global North, are much more significant in the recent era. The formula 'SSC and triangular cooperation' is ubiquitous in documents dated post-2000 and translated into the concept of the 'global partnership' enshrined in the Busan Global Partnership Agreement. An OECD Briefing on the Busan Global Partnership Agreement casts doubt on the continuing salience of the categories of North and South in the light of the economic crisis:

> 'International co-operation can no longer be understood as simply a relationship between "rich" and "poor" governments, but rather it is a complex network that includes middle-income countries that are both donors and recipients (South-South cooperation), multilateral organisations, international financial institutions, and non-governmental bodies such as the private sector and civil society organisations' (OECD, 2012).

Importantly in the Nairobi (2003), Bogota (2010) and Busan (2010) documents, the merits of triangular cooperation are framed as emerging from different national comparative advantages. This reframes the idea of development as one that no longer represents a collective struggle to prise economic justice out of a recalcitrant North. Rather, development appears as a technical task to be achieved with maximum efficiency. While the salience of the north-south divide is rejected as no longer relevant, traditional donors nevertheless smuggle the distinction back into formulations of triangular cooperation through claims about distinctive contributions, which constitute a second distinctive feature of contemporary SSC. The Global North is presented in recent documents as efficient in providing resources and particular expertise, while the Global South provides such advantages as 'proximity of experience': similar experiences of socio-economic issues arising from problems of late development, or regional linguistic or cultural ties that will overcome problems of interaction and provide greater potential for 'capacity development' (NOD 2003; BSTEID, 2010). Documents on SSC produced by traditional donor agencies endorse this approach. DAC donors argue that their own comparative advantage, within an 'SSC and triangular cooperation" framework, is "years of knowhow in development assistance' (OECD, 2009: 9). This claim links the Global North to expertise, research and training, thus departing from the ambitions of 1970s SSC, cementing the place of the old North in the new global division of labour and leaving DAC donors in control of the development process. Emerging donor experts, however, come cheaper than DAC donor experts, reducing staffing costs, increasing speed and enhancing value for money (OECD. 2009: 8). This delinks problems of development from power relations, turning it into a coordination issue and downplaying established aid industry hierarchies, rather than challenging them. As a World Bank official with experience of China's SSC programmes in Africa commented approvingly on the outcome of the High Level Forum in Busan:

> A key achievement of HLF-4 is that it moves discussion of development cooperation modalities away from the dichotomy of North-South versus South-South to the recognition of a continuum of vertical, horizontal and triangular partnership modalities, with each offering positive benefits and opportunities for achieving shared objectives. This is a view that is very much in keeping with the World Bank's vision of the democratization of development (Karp 2011).

The South-South side of the triangle ceases to be about efforts by poor countries to cooperate in wresting power from former colonial masters and instead represents a relationship whereby Northern actors can teach local ones about ways of doing things at one remove, via contracted Southern partners, without the terms 'north' and 'south' needing to be mentioned. This removes obstacles raised by the embarrassment of radical inequality in pay and conditions and prevents the colonial master-servant binary inconveniently imposing itself as a metaphor on the situation, giving rise to local intransigence and ill-will (Hughes, 2011).

Traditional donors' reservation of authoritative knowhow for themselves is contested by emerging donors, who argue their recent experience of development is more relevant to Southern recipients and therefore their own expertise is more pertinent. Both India and China have invested heavily in training and education programmes. This includes the growth of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme, originally established in 1964 and recently expanded in line with India's rapidly growing investment and trade particularly with Africa. The programme's purpose is presented as allowing poorer countries 'to share in the Indian developmental experience acquired over six decades of India's existence as a free nation'. The return on this for India is 'a visible and growing awareness among other countries about the competence of India as a provider of technical know-how and expertise as well as training opportunities, consultancy services and feasibility studies' as well as 'immense goodwill and substantive cooperation among the developing countries' (Government of India, 2015).

Similarly, China's International Poverty Reduction Centre, established jointly with UNDP, is regarded by the Chinese Government as a key plank of China's SSC programme, and its delegations to various countries in Asia, Africa and the Pacific foreground China's 'success' in reducing poverty at home as a potential opportunity for learning for China's poor neighbours. This is similar to the Nairobi Outcome Document's framing of development as 'the need to enhance local capacity in developing countries by supporting local capabilities, institutions, expertise and human resources and national systems, where appropriate, in contribution to national development priorities at the request of developing countries' (NOD: para 13).

This claim apparently resonates with the original premise of SSC. The 1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action on Technical Cooperation, for example, stated that exchanges of technical knowledge between developing countries allows them to:

> '… create, acquire, adapt, transfer and pool knowledge and experience for their mutual benefit and for achieving social and economic self-reliance which are essential for their social and economic development' (BAPA, 1978: para. 5).

Original SSC formulations emphasised underdevelopment not only as arising from lack of knowhow but *also* from active exploitation. The BAPA emphasises that 'building capacity' is a 'dimension' of 'the developing world's determination to achieve national and collective self-reliance' (BAPA, para. 12) aimed at enabling developing countries 'to attain a greater degree of participation in international economic activities and to expand international cooperation' (BAPA, para. 15).

A third issue in contemporary SSC is the foregrounding of the importance of transparency and coordination, which has largely displaced the nurturing of solidarity as a key principle of South-South relations. For example, both the Nairobi Outcome Document and the Bogota Statement emphasise the need to enhance 'mutual accountability and transparency'. The Bogota statement suggests that Southern Donors should learn from the aid effectiveness agenda's evidence-based approach. Similarly, in the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (2012), emphasises Mutual accountability and more importantly accountability to civil society. This is regarded as a prerequisite to 'deepen, extend and operationalise the democratic ownership of development policies and processes' (para 12).

Arguably, however, the basis envisaged for democratic ownership here is a slender one, and the apparent advance on earlier formulations of SSC is therefore something of a mirage. Early formulations of SSC were reticent on the subject of democracy. The word democracy does not appear at all in the Buenos Aires Plan of Action of 1978, for perhaps obvious reasons. Clearly, this falls a long way short of an emancipatory project, or even a democratic one, envisaging politics as a top-down process of calling into being a unified public supporting the state in its anti-imperialist struggle for economic power. This resonates with the nation-building rhetoric of the era, which incorporated not only sporadic attempts to promote modernization, democratization and welfare but also programmes of cultural homogenisation and authoritarian mobilization involving widespread and devastating bloodshed. The formulations in Nairobi, Bogota and Busan do not substitute specifically democratic approaches to representative politics; rather they invoke thin forms of "multi-stakeholder" consultation through transparency and accountability as advocated, for example, in the World Bank's approach to social accountability (World Bank, 2004). The key features of this approach are its consumer orientation, focused on individuals making rights-based claims, rather than collective action in pursuit of a common interest. The public are not mobilized politically but are offered the opportunity to monitor outcomes, particularly as these affect them individually. The aim is not a political redistribution of resources based upon ideas of justice, as might be expected of a democratic approach, but a market reallocation of resources based upon ideas of efficiency. In neo-liberal formulations, accountability and transparency ensure that the preferences of all stakeholders are fully elaborated in the interests of optimally efficient resource distribution: as the Nairobi Outcome

Document (2003) puts it, 'the impact of SSC should be assessed with a view to improving, as appropriate, its quality in a results-oriented manner'.

The final and perhaps most obvious significant difference between the two eras of SSC is the contemporary emphasis on the integration of supply chains, directly contradicting the former aspiration for national economies under popular control. In the Global Partnership Agreement, the nature of development itself is defined as GDP growth facilitated by a 'framework' through which 'developing countries increasingly integrate, both regionally and globally, creating economies of scale that will help them better compete in the global economy' (Busan, 2011, para.28). This precludes democratic debate of the dependency thesis itself, as well as limiting the scope for states to operate interventionist industrial policies.

Although trade was a key concern of the NIEO, 1970s discussions focused on promoting the autonomous development of countries in the South, in particular through technological upgrading that could end dependence on primary commodity exports manufactured imports. The decentring of manufacturing away from the Global North and the emergence of global supply chains as integral to the international economy has disturbed the geographical coherence of the core-periphery model. China's relationships with its suppliers of raw materials are a significant aspect of its aid activities and its interest in SSC is clearly linked to the need to import commodities. China's relationship with its South East Asia neighbours of Myanmar, the Lao Democratic Republic and Cambodia, for example, are to a great extent driven by China's demands for energy from hydropower projects on the lower Mekong, offshore oil and gas exploration and the pipelines linking these to South West China..

At the same time, suppliers of raw materials to China's manufacturing industries find themselves flooded with Chinese goods in return, precluding their own industrial development and trapping them in primary commodity production. Ethiopian prime minister Meles Zenawi commented at a three-day China-Africa summit in 2006 that 90 per cent of manufactured goods in Addis Ababa were Chinese-made and added: 'There are people who say the flood of Chinese goods will undermine Africa's national industry, but I don't think this is a problem. If you can't compete with the global market, you have to get it from the global market. There is no alternative' (Watts, 2006). Yet this more closely resembles the classic neo-colonial North-South relationships described by dependency theorists than the solidarity relationships envisaged by early 1970s SSC.

The attractiveness of this kind of relationship in 2006 was arguably predicated on the temporary high price of primary commodities rather than on any particular solidarity manifest in Chinese business dealings. The fall in commodity prices since 2014 has produced a significant slow-down in GDP growth across a range of resource-dependent economies in Africa, revealing the continued vulnerability of African economies (Bailey, 2016). The building of supply chains linking raw materials from across the world to manufacturing concentrations in China, India and elsewhere that supply markets in the Global North represents the promotion of the interests of globalised capital over the interests of territorially based communities. Even though new kinds of public-private partnership or state-owned enterprises may be implementing these projects in practice, through deals with state actors, this amounts to renewed harnessing of the force of the state to the workings of the market

rather than bringing ideas about development and resource distribution under democratic control.

SSC AND THE STATE

These four areas of difference suggest that current SSC represents an extension of neoliberalism rather than a genuine alternative to it, and that it operates ideologically to recall the radical potential of the original formulation while at the same time denying the relevance of the North-South dichotomy and promoting a depoliticised and disempowering approach to development. Underlying this shift is the transformation of the assumed nature of the state from a representative repository of active sovereignty over economic resources to a 'competition' or 'regulatory' state (Cerny, 1997; Jayasuriya, 2005). Jayasuriya argues that processes of neoliberal reform in Asia have created a new model of statehood which "shifts the function of the state from the direct allocation of social and material goods and resources to the provision of regulatory frameworks within the economic order' (2006: 384). Such states have retreated from ideas of sovereignty over resources in favour of neo-liberal models privileging market allocations of resources as more efficient and therefore better. The regulatory state thus refrains from developing political agendas focused on the material interests of citizens, and instead retreats into a technical agenda of market regulation. Of course, the reality of many post-colonial states in the 1970s was quite different from this democratic ideal. It prominently featured widespread predation and rentierism in which elites aligned with foreign and domestic capital to strip assets in a form of primitive accumulation in order to generate slush funds for shoring up political dominance. However, the belief that the state was at least potentially reclaimable as a vehicle through which the peoples of the Global South could exercise sovereignty over their national economies was a mobilizing ideal integral to the call for a NEIO and encouraging the centrality of political struggle to the question of development.

The NIEO was premised on the belief that a large part of the problem of predatory statehood was the role of northern capital and transnational corporations in seducing southern political elites away from their representative function. Current formulations of SSC, by contrast, now regard alliances between states and international capital as positive drivers of development. The role of states in the South is not to contest with businesses for control of resources, but to ally with them in a way that respects formal sovereignty while integrating supply chains through facilitating the deterritorialised flow of resources and finance. The Nairobi Outcome Document (2003) defines South-South Cooperation in terms of 'regional integration initiatives across the developing world, seen in, among other things, the creation of regional common markets, customs unions, cooperation in political fields, institutional and regulatory frameworks, and inter-State transport and communications networks'. This represents cooperation to promote the neoliberal development model, not cooperation to challenge it, and thereby supports the argument that emerging donors are buttressing the international neoliberal order through engaging in a new distribution of the work of constructing hegemony.

SSC is significant not only because of the material practices that it embraces, but also because of the utility of the language of SSC in legitimising this enterprise. The language of SSC invokes the earlier aspiration for states that stand for properly representative politics even while implementing a set of practices that encourage the integration of states into global supply chains by tying current and future natural resource exploitation into trade relationships that mirror colonial patterns. The emphasis of new emerging donors on state sovereignty appears to hark back to the NIEO agenda, but the models of development implicit in current forms of SSC have nothing to do with an agenda of state-led industrialization. Rather they reflect standard neo-liberal practices of global integration, international investment and export-led development strategies.

The modalities of SSC implemented by emerging donors blurs the dividing line between state and capital, reflecting Glassman's account of neoliberalism as 'a class practice of the most powerful, geographically mobile capitalists', in which the state is not simply 'rolled back' but mobilized selectively and opportunistically in a range of strategies, including some (such as nationalization of banks following financial crises) that have traditionally been seen as antithetical to a neoliberal approach (Glassman, 2007: 96). New forms of economic cooperation in the context of SSC make the relationship between state and capital opaque, thereby making efforts at popular sovereignty problematic. The obvious example of this is the complex relationship between aid and investment by Chinese state-owned investment banks. These entities defy the divide between state and market, leading some authors to regard the challenge of the BRICS as representing the return of state-led development. However, as Ban and Blyth suggest, the ways in which the BRICS 'attempted to balance their adoption of select parts of the Post-Washington Consensus while defending and often reinventing the relevance of state-led development policies under the guise of being compliant with the Washington Consensus itself' (Ban and Blyth, 2013: 20) can also be read as a sign of the adaptability and durability of neoliberal approaches.

The relationship between the state and the market as embodied in, for example, Chinese state-owned enterprises is highly complex. In 2012, 80 per cent of the value of the Chinese stock market comprised national or state-owned firms (Wooldridge, 2012) but there is a high degree of variation between sectors, provinces and enterprises as to what this means. Efforts to reform state-owned enterprises have relied upon restructuring the companies so that they more closely resemble private sector organisations, while maintaining tight state - and more specifically Communist Party - control (Wei, 2015). This has produced a situation in which the distinction between state and non-state parts of the economy, and old distinctions between state owned enterprises and private companies, has become 'blurred' (Hassard et al, 2010: 511). Equally, new approaches, including "national champions" – private firms that are fostered through close relationships with the state (Woodridge, 2012) - and innovative forms of public-private partnerships (FT Confidential, 2016) represent new forms of economic entity that combine state power with the expansion of financialisation in new ways. These are pioneering new approaches to development assistance that significantly disrupt the typologies implicit in DAC definitions, and in the years following the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, attracted approval from stalwart supporters of neoliberalism. The Economist, for example, reported in 2012 that the success of new forms of state capitalism reflected the greater power

and sophistication of the modern state, which, it suggested, is 'far better at using capitalist tools to achieve its desired ends' (Wooldridge, 2012). The new state capitalism, "instead of handing industries to bureaucrats or cronies…, turns them into companies run by professional managers' (ibid).

The implications of this for the politics of development are profound. Although this is to some extent a state-led development effort, it lacks any kind of link to democratic control. In the rhetoric of contemporary SSC, the foregrounding of state sovereignty is not a precondition for democratic control of development trajectories but a substitution for it. This links the idea of the state as potentially wresting control of resource distribution in the interests of the world's poor with the practice of state facilitation of greater international flows of capital and resources between and within South and North. The wedding of these two contradictory approaches to development has been relatively successful in the context of high commodity prices awarding windfall profits that can fund populist policies and keep a lid on conflict in a context of increasing inequality within nations, but the end of the commodities boom and the slow-down of growth in the emerging powers may presage a decrease in the utility of this ideological fix (FT reporters, 2016).

CONCLUSION

Comparison of the rhetoric of South-South Cooperation in the 21st century, as opposed to the earlier iteration in the 1970s, reveals a distinct shift in the ideological underpinnings of the practice. SSC in the early 1970s was regarded as solidarity action amongst subaltern actors to challenge their domination by Northern economic actors, including not only Northern states, but Northern-based firms and Northern-dominated international organisations. SSC thus represented a political alliance intended to exercise power on a global stage and force the reform of an international economic order regarded as fundamentally unjust. In the context of this collaboration, the state in the South was regarded –idealistically and despite the obvious reality of predatory practices by state elites – as the repository not only of economic sovereignty over natural resources but also of the political aspirations of the oppressed peoples of the formerly colonized world. SSC was not merely a compact between states but between oppressed peoples of various nations. The contemporary usage of the term, as explicated in the documents examined above, is quite different, and reflects a neo-liberal framing of development problems as technical matters that can be resolved through appropriate strategies of domestic reform and capacity building combined with embrace of liberal property rights and free trade. The role of the state is specifically apolitical, focused upon regulation rather than redistribution or administration, with the key objective being the fostering of growth through efficient allocation of resources in order to meet human development goals. The exercise of political power in the interest of justice no longer features.

The pre-eminent place of the emerging economies – particularly China – in the revitalization of South-South Cooperation has been regarded as threatening to traditional northern donors and the neoliberal consensus. However, the ideological hegemony of

neoliberal ideas facilitating the globalization of capital has arguably been well-served by the activities of the emerging economies in aid and development in low-income South East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. The outsourcing of traditional forms of technical development assistance from DAC countries to emerging economies assists in the drive to depoliticization inherent in neoliberal development strategies, since it obscures the rich-poor, North-South, centre-periphery categories of dependency theory which remained problematic for the legitimacy of the aid enterprise throughout the postcolonial era. At the same time, emerging donors have rapidly promoted greater integration of economies across the Global South into the global economy courtesy of Chinese and Indian investment banks, infrastructure projects and mineral companies, and other ingredients of the 2003 to 2014 commodities super cycle.

They have done so in a way that has brought a new degree of flexibility into neo-liberal orthodoxy, which has assisted in propping up capitalist relations in the aftermath of the economic devastation of the Global Financial Crisis. Now that commodities prices are falling, however, it is questionable whether this form of South-South Cooperation will continue to appear as attractive as formerly to either emerging economies or their less fortunate partners.

The new rhetoric of South-South Cooperation awards a regulatory, rather than a specifically political, role for the state, if the former is regarded as entailing the deployment of power in the interest of neo-liberal market formation, rather than to determine who gets what, when and how. This is counter-intuitive given the continued heavy dependence upon state capitalism of three of the BRICS countries, China, Russia and Brazil. However, since the 2008 Global Financial Crisis the relationship between states and markets in neo-liberal orthodoxy has altered significantly, with states playing a more complex interventionary role in economic affairs, but in the interests of shoring up global capital rather than distributing welfare to workers. In this context, the strategies of emerging powers are less of a challenge to OECD-DAC-promoted models of development practice than an expansion and elaboration of them in a rapidly transforming global economy. Yet the state remains a contested site, and as state revenues decline, particularly in primary commodity producers, new political mobilizations to re-assert a redistributive agenda may be back on the cards in the Global South raising the question of whether the forms of cooperation explicit in current approaches to SSC will be subject to new forms of challenge in the name of sovereignty and economic rights.

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